

Edinburgh Incorporated Societies

7.

SECOND ADDRESS TO THE FOURTEEN INCORPORATIONS,

By a FRIEND to a TRADESMAN.

Let each man think, That on his single Virtue
Depends the Good and Fame of all the rest :
ETERNAL HONOUR, or PERPETUAL INFAMY !

My Good Friends, and Worthy Citizens !

IT gave me the greatest pleasure to read, some days since, a paper addressed to you, giving an account of your cause before the Court of Session; the more so, as I am sensible, that what is therein set forth, is consistent with fact, and the advices to you consonant with reason: At the same time, I think myself, as a well-wisher to your interest, called upon to make a few remarks upon the present Election, and enforce the opinions delivered in that paper as to your conduct. It gave me no less satisfaction, to find your (I may say) unanimous approbation of the report of the Delegates, which gives a real and most proper narration of some parts of the abuse you have met with, not only from the Town Council, but also from Sir Laurence Dundas, and his MIGNIONS. You there find, you have been led into a most expensive, and most trifling litigation, by Sir Laurence's party in Council; and you must be, nay, you thereby declare yourselves sensible, that if he had not given his assent to these steps, they DURST not have opposed you: And besides, as these people are not over-wealthy, you may be certain, that the PURSE, as well as the countenance of your Representative, is employed against you. This assertion may to some appear extraordinary, but a moment's consideration must make it very plain. Who are those men who oppose you? Are they a society of any kind, interested in the good of the community? Are they authorised by the Merchant Company to oppress you? Or, are they not rather a set of men, who have got into Council, by cringing to Mr Lawrie; and who now find, that both his, and Sir Laurence's administration, has been of such a disagreeable nature,

ture, that they cannot expect to continue in power, but by keeping you in that same dastardly state you are now in? That they are no society interested in the good of the Town, will be readily granted,—their whole actions and behaviour show it; and that they have no authority from the Merchant Company, is as certain. This respectable body, in the year 1763, were, if I mistake not, the original proposers of this restriction being taken off from the Trades; and a minute still remains in their books, unrescinded, highly approving of the plan of doing so.

Your oppressors have used very great liberties, in representing you as the most despicable, and most ignorant wretches; and that considering your abilities and education, you have already too much to say in the administration; but that, nevertheless, you are now grasping at the compleat management of the City, when, in fact, the Merchant Company have nothing to say in the affair. No one amongst you, I dare say, will deny the merit to that honourable body it deserves; and I dare say you will be sensible, that if they had had any power in the City affairs, the same gross enormities would not have been committed, which we see daily put in practice by the present party. Your Delegates were exceeding sensible of this; and, at their very first meeting, appointed a Committee of eight of their number, to meet with some of the merchants who were most zealous for the rectifying all the abuses you daily met with, and to go hand in hand with them, to have both bodies properly represented in Council. After this meeting, your Delegates appointed a standing Committee of fourteen, to meet with the Merchants whenever they should signify their intention of doing so; and, after all these steps, are you so much to blame? I really think those people who have audacity to misrepresent facts so egregiously, deserve to be despised by all good citizens; and you, in place of being reviled, should meet with their approbation, for the great candour and moderation you have shown in all the steps of this important affair. Can there be a stronger mark that these men had neither orders from the Merchant Company to oppose you, nor have they met with their approbation since, than that every one of them are most deservedly rejected from the direction of that respectable body; and your friends brought in by an immense majority? How happy is this for you! for the friends of Sir Laurence Dundas were foolish enough to affirm, that all this opposition in Council, was stirred up by a late Chief Magistrate, to serve his own ends, and would only have the tendency to put you all mad for the time, and at last would end in a bubble of air; and that the Merchants in town, who pay four-fifths of the stent, and who are men of *such fortunes, so high birth, such liberal education, and so very great talents* for managing the affairs of the City, would declare ten to one against that party who support your cause. But, how unexpected! three to one appeared in your favour; in short I may be allowed to say, that those people who so wrongously oppose you, are



are spewed out by every society, as unfit to appear amongst men of liberality and candour. It must appear, therefore, that your opponents are conscious of their own NOTHINGNESS,—and convinced, that if you shall obtain redress of your grievances, the first step you will naturally take, will be, to rid the Town from the management of men so undeserving of the high honour ACCIDENT has conferred upon them.

After having entered upon this cause in the keen and spirited manner you have done,—having voted your Poors' fund for the carrying it on, and approved of the minute of the Delegates, I may say un-animously, Can there be the smallest doubt what part you ought to act? I am certain, that there is not any one of you who shall consider this affair with DISPASSION and CANDOUR, without declaring, that he can only move in one line, if he acts consistently, either for the good of his own society, or of the community at large. Would it not be very absurd to tell us, that he will, in every point that concerns the honour and interest of your bodies, stand firm as a rock, and at the same time vote with Sir Laurence Dundas's party, either as a partizan of that GREAT MAN, or a private friend to any of his party? What absurdity! Must not even the most zealous for supporting that interest, see the folly of these assertions, and the incompatibility of performing two things so extremely contradictory? Is it possible that any of you shall sacrifice the honour and interest of his own Incorporation, and indeed of the whole Trades together, so infamously?—as, by the shadow of voting with your Brethren in one instance,—vote plump at the same time, in an hundred different cases, with a party who have abused you, and have done every thing in their power to retain you in bondage. Has not Sir Laurence Dundas, or his PROXIES, (for so I must call them in Council,) voted in direct opposition to you? and have not you declared, in the minute before mentioned, that he has acted diametrically opposite to your honour and interest? and can any of you, after this, be so mean, so base, as, for the sake of some pecuniary consideration, to vote with such people? I hope it will be impossible to find many such: But knowing there are a few, who have neither the honour nor interest of your body at heart, and yet have the honour to be numbered amongst the Trades of Edinburgh, I should think it advisable, nay absolutely necessary, to inform them, that, upon this occasion, they must give up their own thoughts and inclinations for the good of the Community, and that they must even sacrifice their private interest for the good of the Public. Must not every one see the absurdity of a man pretending to be anxious in behalf of the Trades, and at the same time voting with a party who oppose them? It gives me pain to find a few men (at least hitherto) respectable, hold out these sentiments, That if they support your cause in general, they do enough; and that they may then safely join all the rest of Sir Laurence Dundas's measures. But I have no doubt, you will soon see
through

through this blind, and return these men *measure for measure*. And, at the same time, I can't help pronouncing the consequences of such a behaviour, that you, exasperated with their unbecoming conduct, will not only with one consent withdraw your countenance and trade from them, but at the same time throw a STIGMA upon them, which will stick close all the days of their lives. How infamously would they behave, who could squander away funds for the support of the poor and needy, and their own decayed Brethren,—and at the same time bring into Council, men who will render that pursuit in vain, for obtaining which these funds are applied! This conduct must strike every one of common sense, as highly meriting their greatest abhorrence, and, I have no doubt, will be treated in a way these people (if any shall prove so daring, and so insignificant) by no means expect. Think then well; be not imposed upon, by specious reasoning, or VAIN PROMISES. You have begun this pursuit for Freedom with eagerness and spirit, becoming the character of Tradesmen of Edinburgh: If you fail as to your conduct, the reflections, nay, *stigmata* thrown upon you, will not be confined to yourselves,—but your descendants, for ages yet to come, will feel the effects of your misconduct: Your very children (when old age will make their *tender care* necessary for your comfort here) will *despise* you as the cause of their slavery; and when your bodies are rotten in the earth, your fellow-tradesmen will curse your very dust, for not obtaining them Freedom upon the easy terms you can do at present. In short, no one amongst you, can have a will of their own, when the public good is concerned.

Laying both parties aside with respect to their Leaders, consider which are your friends, and which your foes,—adhere firmly to the first, and avoid the last as the devil; and he that does otherwise, will not only meet with what I have threatened him with here, but will have great cause for repentance, for violently causing the Poors' money to be squandered away, and, at the same time, acting a most mean, dishonourable part, in counteracting the intention of its application: For sure, not even Bailie Walker himself, can imagine that such conduct can be agreeable in the sight of the Supreme Being. It gives me very great pain, to look forward upon the effects of Mr Dundas's coming here at this time. I respect him as a Gentleman; but, considering the bad consequences of Sir Laurence's conduct here last Election, by exasperating the populace so much as to raise mobs in the City, which not only hurt your properties, but endangered your lives, I cannot but be uneasy at the prospect of this Election, when similar steps are taken to enslave you.—I hope, however, that you will all guard against such measures as may incense the inhabitants; for, if they were enraged at Sir Laurence's party filling up some of the first offices in Council, with the most *despicable* characters, how much more must they be incensed at any of you who shall misbehave in this great pursuit for LIBERTY?

Edinburgh, Sept. 9. 1777.

